THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) There is no report from the State Governments of Bihar and West Bengal suggesting the dwindling of population of Wildlife, particularly of the elephants, due to unchecked, illegal poaching in the districts bordepng Bihar and West Bengal. However, some stray incidents of illegal hunting in the States have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) and (c) Studies relating to the estimation of populations of some major species of wildlife are conducted by the State Government from time to time to evaluate the trend of population growth of such animals.

The number of some of the major animals reported to have been killed in Orissa over the past 3 years is as follow:

Sl. No.	Species	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
1.	Tiger	1	1	—
2.	Leopard	9	8	3
3.	Elephant	6	7	9
4.	Others	22	17	26
	Total	38	33	38

(d) The steps taken by the Government to protect the wildlife include, *mter-alia,* the following:

(i) Unauthorised hunting of species listed in Schedules of Wildlife (Protection) Act has been banned by law.

(ii) International trade in endangered species of animals and articles made thereof is regulated under the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

(iii) A network of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks has been set up for conservation of wild flora and fauna.

(iv) Regional and sub-regional offices of wildlife preservation have been set up mostly at the main export centres (Delhi, Bombay, Madras & Calcutta) of the country to prevent any illegal smuggling of wildlife.

(v) Raids are carried out by the wildlife authorities whenever information of illegal trading in wildlife reaches them.

(vi) Central Assistance is being provided to State/UT Governments for strengthening anti-poaching infrastructure and protecting wildlife populations and habitats, on request from the State/UT Governments.

(vii) Cooperation of Police, BSF, Coast Guard and Army is also taken in apprehending the poachers, and illegal traders, whenever required.

(viii) There is a scheme for payment of reward to the informers, which among other things, helps in getting intelligence regarding smuggling of wildlife products.

Extinction of Tiger

2435. SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to certain reports indicating sen-..us danger of extinction of tiger by the turn of the century;

(b) if so, the details thereof, with reaction of Government toward these reports:

(c) whether Government propose to take some steps urgently on warfooting basis, to arrest the situation of extinction; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (d) Some scientists have expressed apprehension about the tiger getting extinct by the turn of the century.

Government is aware of the serious threat to the tiger due to poaching to meet the demand of the illegal trade in tiger bones and other parts of its body.

The steps taken by the Government to protect the tiger and its habitat are as under:

(i) A Tiger Crisis Cell has been set up in the Ministry.

(ii) State Governments have been advised to strengthen vigilance and intensify patrolling around the tiger reserves.

(iii) Steps have been initiated to set np Special Strike Force in the Project Tiger areas.

(iv) Steps have been taken to set up a Global Tiger Forum with membership of all 13 range States. India has recently ratified the Statutes of the Global Tiger Forum.

(v) A bilateral Protocol on Tiger Conservation was recently signed with China, which, *inter-alia*, provides for cooperation in controlling poaching.

Saving the endangered plant species

2436. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Botanical Survey of India has compiled a Red Book of Indian Plants, providing data on 622 threatened plant species including 132 endangered species;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take to save the threatened and endangered plant species in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b)Yes Sir, The Red Data Book on Indian Plants published by Botanical Survey of India provides data on 622 threatened plants including 132 endangered plants. It also gives information on the name of the plant species, its family status, distribution, habitat and ecology data etc.

(c) The measures taken to preserve these species include the following:

(i) Establishment of a network of protected areas as National Parks, Sanctuaries and Bio-sphere Reserves for protection of the flora and fauna including threatened species-

(ii) Inforcement of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which, after the amendment in 1991, includes endangered plants and which now provides strict penalties for infringement;

(iii) Restriction on commercial exploitation and export of endangered special through regulations in pursuance of the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972;

(iv) *Ex-situ* conservation of endangered species in botanical gardens to ensure survival of these species under captive conditions for their future restoration in the wild;

(v) Development of protocol for multiplication of some endangered species of plants through tissue culture, seed banks; etc.

(vi) Survey and collection of data on threatened and endangered species and efforts for their rehabilitation; and

(vii) Enlisting rare and threatened species in the Red Data Book of Indian Plants published by BSI for creating awareness about the need for conservation.